

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY MAPUTO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

C O N F I D E N T I A L KIGALI 0878

NAIROBI/MAPUTO FOR CODEL DIGGS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OREP (DIGGS, CHARLES C.), PFOR, US, RW

SUBJECT: RWANDAN PRESIDENT/FONMIN RECEIVE CODEL DIGGS

1. SUMMARY - DURING BRIEF BUT WELL RECEIVED VISIT TO KIGALI NOVEMBER 17 - 18, REPS DIGGS AND COLLINS HELD FRUITFUL TALKS WITH PRESIDENT AND FONMIN, WHO BOTH STRESSED RWANDA'S IDENTIFICATION WITH WEST, ITS DESPERATE NEED FOR MORE U.S. DEVELOPMENTAL ASSISTANCE, ITS GRATIFICATION OVER SECRETARY'S INITIATIVES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, AND ITS WORRIES OVER LONGER-TERM OUTLOOK FOR THAT REGION. BY BOTHERING TO VISIT KIGALI AT ALL, AND BY FORTHRIGHT EXCHANGE ON ISSUES, CODEL GAVE IMPORTANT BOOST TO U.S.-RWANDAN RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. CODEL CLIMAXED 18-HOUR VISIT TO KIGALI WITH EARLY MORNING CALL ON PRESIDENT HABYARIMANA AT HIS OFFICE, NOV. 18 PRESIDENT EXPRESSED DELIGHT AT VISIT BUT CONCERN THAT IT WAS TOO SHORT TO GAIN A FEEL FOR RWANDA. REPS DIGGS AND COLLINS, ASSISTED BY DR. CHALENOR, EXPLAINED TIME CONSTRAINTS BUT ASSURED PRESIDENT THEY WOULD CARRY HIS VIEWS AND THEIR IMPRESSIONS BACK TO CONGRESSIONAL COLLEAGUES AS WELL AS TO PRESIDENT-ELECT CARTER, AND THEY INVITED HABYARIMANA TO COMMENT ON BOTH BILATERAL RELATIONS AND STATE OF PLAY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA.

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3. BILATERAL RELATIONS WERE EXCELLENT, ACCORDING TO PRESIDENT,

AND RWANDA CONSIDERED U.S. AMONG ITS CLOSEST FRIENDS.
RWANDANS APPRECIATED U.S. DEVELOPMENTAL ASSISTANCE BUT, FRANKLY,
FELT OUR CONTRIBUTION FELL FAR SHORT OF RWANDAN NEEDS AND U.S.
ABILITIES. U.S. POLICYMAKERS, PRESIDENT
OBSERVED, SHOULD KEEP IN MIND STRONG RADICAL TENDENCIES AMONG
RWANDA'S NEIGHBORS AND PRESSURES ON RWANDA TO FOLLOW
SIMILAR DIRECTION. PRESIDENT HOPED U.S. WOULD TAKE ACCOUNT OF
RWANDA'S "BORDERLINE" SITUATION (I.E., BETWEEN
MODERATES AND RADICALS) AND HELP REINFORCE ITS MODERATING
ROLE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA'S FUTURE.

4. REGARDING TRENDS IN THE REGION GENERALLY, HABYARIMANA
SAID RWANDA WAS GRATIFIED AND ENCOURAGED BY SECRETARY
KISSINGER'S EFFORTS TO BRING ABOUT PEACEFUL CHANGE IN BOTH
RHODESIA AND NAMIBIA. HE BELIEVED THAT, AS RESULT, PROBLEMS
IN BOTH COUNTRIES WERE ON THE WAY TO EVENTUAL SOLUTION.
HE ADDED OUR EFFORTS WERE ALL THE MORE GRATIFYING BECAUSE
RWANDA FELT U.S. HAD ABANDONED ITS FRIENDS IN ANGOLA WHEN GOING
GOT TOUGH THERE.

5. FUTURE OF SOUTH AFRICA, HOWEVER, REMAINED A MAJOR QUESTION
MARK. VORSTER SEEMED UNWILLING TO UNDERSTAND THAT RACIST
POLICIES WERE NOT ONLY ODIOUS TO REST OF WORLD BUT WERE A
POWDER KEG SET TO EXPLODE. PRESIDENT URGED MUCH GREATER
PRESSURE BY U.S. TO BRING ABOUT RAPID CHANGE IN SOUTH AFRICAN
RACIAL POLICIES. OTHERWISE VIOLENCE, BLOODSHED, AND EVEN
MASSACRES CERTAINLY LAY AHEAD.

6. ASKED ABOUT CODEL'S EXPECTATIONS OF CHANGES IN POLICY
TOWARD AFRICA UNDER CARTER ADMINISTRATION, DIGGS REFERRED
OPTIMISTICALLY TO RECENT CARTER PRESS CONFERENCE IN WHICH
PRESIDENT-ELECT STRESSED CONCERN FOR POOREST NATIONS AND
INTENTION TO UPGRADE BILATERAL TIES. HE ALSO REMARKED,
HOWEVER, THAT HE HAD IMPRESSION CURRENT ADMINISTRATION WAS
SENSITIVE TO AFRICAN VIEWS ON ANGOLA AND WOULD NOT BLOCK ANGOLA'S
ADMISSION TO UN. DIGGS ADDED HE HAD RECENTLY VISITED LUANDA -
THE FIRST U.S. OFFICIAL TO BE RECEIVED BY PRESIDENT NETO-
AND HAD COME AWAY CONVINCED THAT ANGOLANS WOULD WELCOME
IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS WITH U.S.

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7. CODEL WAS GIVEN SIMILAR PITCH YESTERDAY AFTERNOON BY
FONMIN NSEKALIJE, DURING 90-MINUTE CONVERSATION IN HIS
OFFICE. GOR IDENTIFIED CLOSELY WITH U.S. AND OTHER WESTERN
FRIENDS, FONMIN SAID, AND HAD STUCK WITH US ON ISSUES
CONCERNING VIETNAM, CAMBODIA, PUERTO RICO, AND ANGOLA.
IT APPLAUDS OUR CURRENT EFFORTS TO BRING ABOUT PEACEFUL
CHANGE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, BUT FEARS OUR EFFORTS MAY HAVE
BEGUN TOO LATE. NSEKALIJE STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF BRINGING

STRONG PRESSURES TO BEAR ON VORSTER SOON IF VIOLENCE WAS TO BE
AVERTED.

8. FONMIN ALSO WARNED THAT CLOCK WAS RUNNING IN FAVOR OF RADICAL EXTREMISTS IN RHODESIA. HE WAS WORRIED THAT NKOMO AND MUGABE, UNDER PRESSURES FROM EXTREMIST ELEMENTS MIGHT BE ATTEMPTING TO TORPEDO GENEVA TALKS. HE WARNED THAT COMMUNIST INFLUENCE AND MILITARY SUPPORT WERE INCREASING AMONG NATIONALISTS, AND THAT THOSE IN FAVOR OF MODERATION AND PEACEFUL CHANGE, INCLUDING RWANDA, WERE FALLING BEHIND.

9. "EVEN THOUGH YOUR AMBASSADOR MAY NOT THINK SO," FONMIN CONTINUED, BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH U.S. ARE GOOD. U.S. AND RWANDAN INTERESTS CONVERGE IN MOST AREAS, BUT GOR BELIEVES WE COULD DO MUCH MORE THAN WE ARE TO ASSIST THIS COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND GIVE MORE TANGIBLE SHAPE TO OUR POLITICAL RELATIONS. FONMIN NOTED THAT RWANDA HAD ITS OWN PROBLEMS WITH RADICAL STUDENTS AND POLITICIANS WHO WERE DEMANDING THAT THE HABYARIMANA GOVERNMENT DEFINE ITSELF IN IDEOLOGICAL TERMS- "CAPITALIST OR COMMUNIST." PRESIDENT WAS DETERMINED THAT RWANDA WOULD ACHIEVE ITS OWN IDENTIFY, INDEPENDENT OF BOTH EXTREMES, BUT IT DESPERATELY NEEDED ECONOMIC HELP FROM ITS FRIENDS IN ORDER TO DO SO.

10. ASKED BY CODEL ABOUT HIS RECENT TRIP TO U.S., NSEKALIJE GREW EXPANSIVE ABOUT HOW IT HAD CORRECTED HIS FALSE IMPRESSIONS OF "ARROGANT, RICH AMERICANS," (AND I CONFIRMED) THAT HE HAD PASSED N FAVORABLE IMPRESSIONS TO RWANDAN PUBLIC ON HIS RETURN. HE ADDED HE WAS DISAPPOINTED NOT TO HAVE MET THE SECRETARY OR ASSISTANT SECRETARY SCHAUFELD BUT SAID HIS CONSULTATIONS WITH SEELYE AND OTHERS HAD BEEN USEFUL.

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11. CODEL ALSO HELD LONG PRESS CONFERENCE LAST EVENING, GENEROUSLY COVERED ON BOTH RADIO AND IN NEWS BULLETIN TODAY. IN ADDITION, THEY WERE VERY POPULAR GUESTS OF HONOR AT RECEPTION AT RESIDENCE LAST NIGHT. MANY GUESTS THERE, INCLUDING FONMIN AND SEVERAL OTHER CABINET MEMBERS, RECALLED WITH NOSTALGIA DIGGS' VISIT HERE SIX YEARS AGO AND HIS SPEECH BEFORE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES (SINCE DISSOLVED).

12. COMMENT - BELIEVE CODEL RECEIVED GOOD PICTURE OF UNEASINESS RWANDANS FEEL OVER THEIR RELATIONS WITH U.S., THEIR DISTINCTLY MODERATE ROLE IN AFRICAN AFFAIRS, AND THEIR FAILURE TO OBTAIN THE ECONOMIC BACKING THEY FEEL THEY MERIT AS AMONG OUR MOST IMPOVERISHED FRIENDS. IN RETURN, MERELY BY HAVING MADE THE ONLY TWO CODEL VISITS TO KIGALI IN LOCAL MEMORY, REP DIGGS MADE AN EXTREMELY HELPFUL

IMPRESSION. SYMPATHETIC ATTENTION WITH WHICH HE AND REP COLLINS ADDRESSED THEMSELVES TO RWANDAN WORRIES GENERATED CONSIDERABLE OPTIMISM AMONG RWANDANS OVER OUTLOOK FOR RELATIONS WITH U.S. IN COMING MONTHS. ALL IN ALL, THEIR CONTRIBUTION WAS VERY POSITIVE FROM EMBASSY STANDPOINT.

13. FOR CODEL: HOPE YOU WILL FEEL FREE TO COMMENT, CORRECT, OR ENLARGE UPON ANY OF FOREGOING.

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